

to the matter if it requires any farther attention and write to you. I also told Wilkes & Harris³ the mayor to communicate any thing they might have to . . . you. I suppose if the cotton is never found Wilkes will have it to pay for. A good many suspect a young man named Preston⁴ who is in business with H. B. Williams.⁵ He had the key of the house up to the 1st Jan & may have had one made like it. No one can prove he ever stole anything but at least a dozen suspected him as soon as they heard the cotton was gone. If you will be up in three or four weeks, you might let the matter rest I think until then or I will return at that time to have a final settlement if you do not think you will be able to be here.

I forgot to mention that the two boys whom their father Ned put in as one hand are each drawing a hands full ration. If you do not intend to allow it you can write Wallace. Barnett⁶ approved my contracts on yesterday without any difficulty.

I have paid Dr. Hayes the money he had advanced for the interests in the Wilson land. We will go out to Roberts after breakfast this morning. Julia & all here join me in love to you & all the family. Say to Mother we wish her many happy returns of her birth day.

P.S.

Dr. Hayes is anxious to work the gold mine at Earharts. What do you think of it? I send a copy of contract thinking you might wish to show it to Howard⁷ provided you wanted to keep it.

¹Probably this was John Wilkes, of Charlotte, who was treasurer of the Rock Island Woolen Mill, a manufacturing concern founded in Catawba County in 1847 and relocated in Charlotte after the Civil War. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg*, I, 151.

²Probably this was William W. Elms, of Lincoln County, who at one time owned an interest in the Rozzelle Ferry toll bridge. Sherrill, *Annals of Lincoln County*, 148.

³A. S. Harris was elected Charlotte mayor in January, 1866, and served under military supervision until July, 1868, when Governor William W. Holden appointed a new mayor and board of aldermen, without explanation. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg*, I, 144, 146.

⁴Not positively identified.

⁵Henry Bartlett Williams (1811-1885) was a businessman and community leader in Charlotte. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg*, II, 82.

⁶Captain John C. Barnett was, at this time, superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Charlotte. He was a man of character and ability, liked by both races. Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 326.

⁷Howard has not been positively identified.